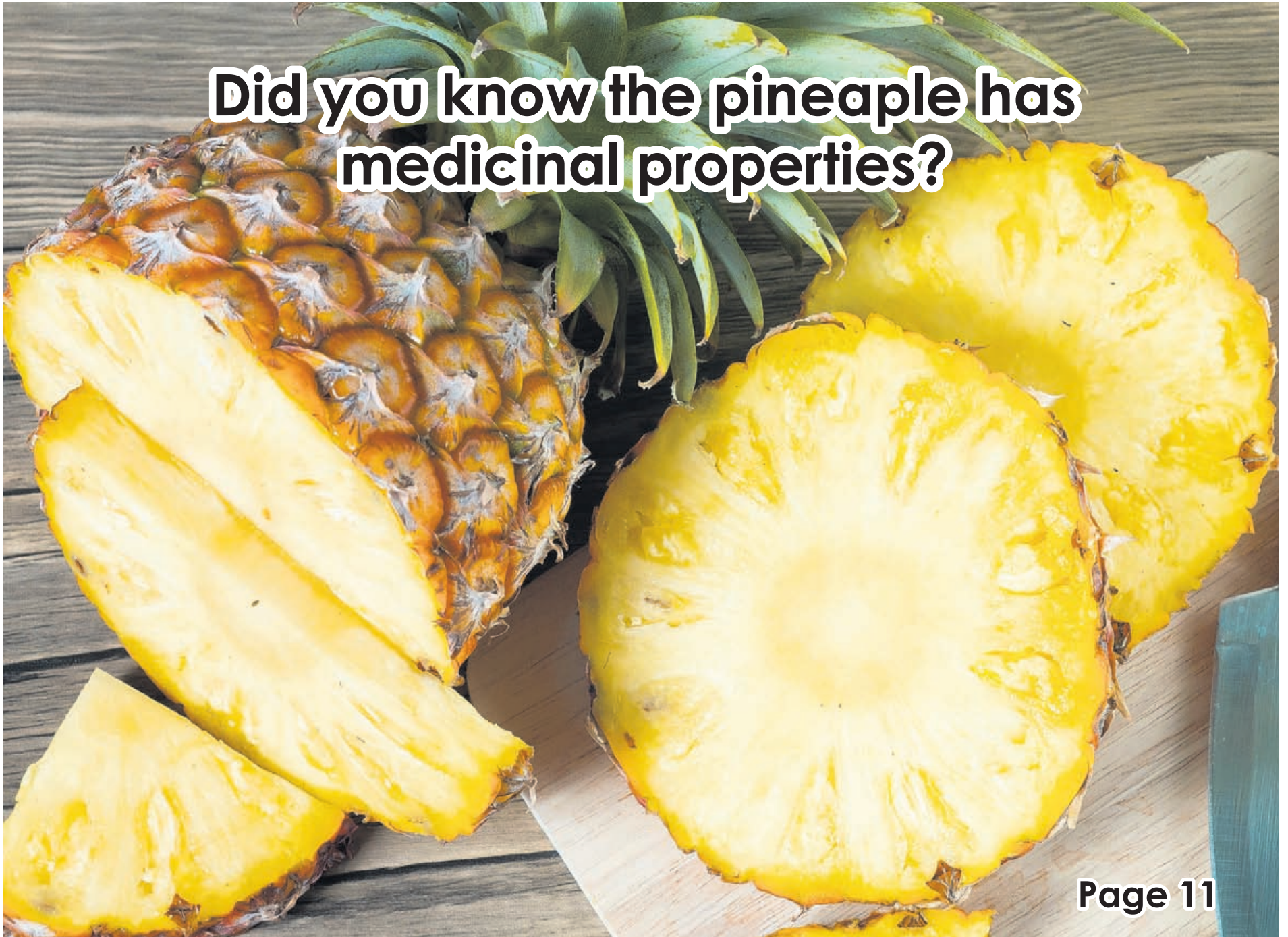




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# U.S. resumes visas for foreign students but demands access to social media accounts

By **MATTHEW LEE** and **ALBEE ZHANG**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The U.S. State Department said Wednesday it is restarting the suspended process for foreigners applying for student visas but all applicants will now be required to unlock their social media accounts for government review.

The department said consular officers will be on the lookout for posts and messages that could be deemed hostile to the United States, its government, culture, institutions or founding principles. In a notice made public Wednesday, the department said it had rescinded its May suspension of student visa processing but said new applicants who refuse to set their social media accounts to "public" and allow them to be reviewed may be rejected. It said a refusal to do so could be a sign they are trying to evade the requirement or hide their online activity.

The Trump administration last month temporarily halted the scheduling of new visa interviews for foreign students hoping to study in the U.S. while preparing to expand the screening of their activity on social media, officials said.

Students around the world have been waiting anxiously



Chinese students wait outside the U.S. Embassy for their visa application interviews, in Beijing on May 2, 2012.

**Associated Press**

for U.S. consulates to reopen appointments for visa interviews, as the window left to book their travel and make housing arrangements narrows ahead of the start of the school year.

On Wednesday afternoon, a 27-year-old Ph.D. student in Toronto was able to secure an appointment for a visa interview next week.

The student, a Chinese national, hopes to travel to the U.S. for a research intern position that would start in late July.

"I'm really relieved," said the student, who spoke on

condition of being identified only by his surname, Chen, because he was concerned about being targeted. "I've been refreshing the website couple of times every day." Students from China, India, Mexico and the Philippines have posted on social media sites that they have been monitoring visa booking websites and closely watching press briefings of the State Department to get any indication of when appointment bookings might resume.

"Under new guidance, consular officers will conduct a

comprehensive and thorough vetting of all student and exchange visitor applicants," the department said in a statement.

"To facilitate this vetting" applicants "will be asked to adjust the privacy settings on all their social media profiles to 'public,'" it said. "The enhanced social media vetting will ensure we are properly screening every single person attempting to visit our country."

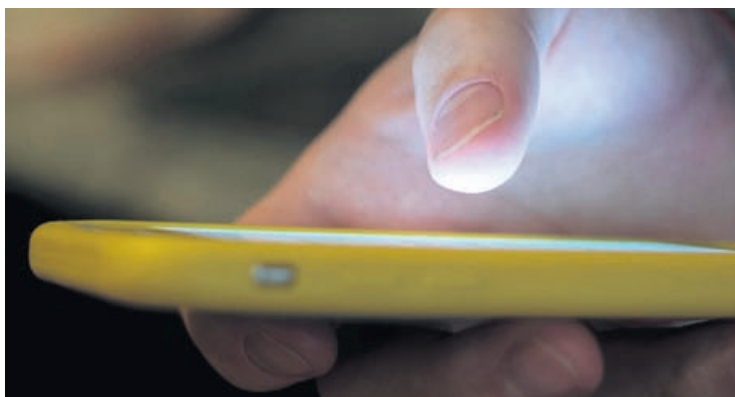
In internal guidance sent to consular officers, the department said they should be looking for "any indica-

tions of hostility toward the citizens, culture, government, institutions, or founding principles of the United States."

International students in the U.S. have been facing increased scrutiny on several fronts. In the spring, the Trump administration revoked permission to study in the U.S. for thousands of students, including some involved only in traffic offenses, before abruptly reversing course. The government also expanded the grounds on which foreign students can have their legal status terminated.

As part of a pressure campaign targeting Harvard University, the Trump administration has moved to block foreign students from attending the Ivy League school, which counts on international students for tuition dollars and a quarter of its enrollment. Trump has said Harvard should cap its foreign enrollment at 15%. The Trump administration also has called for 36 countries to commit to improving vetting of travelers or face a ban on their citizens visiting the United States.

A weekend diplomatic cable sent by the State Department says the countries have 60 days to address U.S. concerns or risk being added to a travel ban that now includes 12 nations. □



A man uses a cell phone in New Orleans, Aug. 11, 2019.

**Associated Press**

By **DEVI SHASTRI**  
**AP Health Writer**

The 988 National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline will stop providing tailored support options to LGBTQ+ youth and young adults on July 17, according to a statement on a federal agency's website.

The decision preempts the

Trump administration's 2026 budget proposal to cut funding for 988's LGBTQ+ youth and young adult services, and is raising alarm bells among LGBTQ+ advocates. Federal data shows the LGBTQ+ youth program has served nearly 1.3 million callers since it started in September

## Trump administration removing 988 hotline service tailored to LGBTQ+ youth in July

ber 2022. The services were accessible under the "Press 3" option on the phone or by replying "PRIDE" via text. The decision was made to "no longer silo" the services and "to focus on serving all help seekers, including those previously served through the Press 3 option," the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) said in a statement dated Tuesday on its website. News of the LGBTQ+ service shutting down comes as the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Tennessee's ban

on gender-affirming care for transgender minors on Wednesday.

The Trevor Project said it received official notice Tuesday that the program was ending. The nonprofit is one of seven centers that provides 988 crisis support services for LGBTQ+ people — and serves nearly half of the people who contact the lifeline.

"Suicide prevention is about people, not politics," Trevor Project CEO Jaymes Black said in a statement Wednesday. "The administration's decision to remove a bipartisan, evidence-based service that

has effectively supported a high-risk group of young people through their darkest moments is incomprehensible." In its statement on the 988 decision, SAMHSA referred to the "LGB+ youth services." Black called the omission of the "T" representing transgender people "callous." "Transgender people can never, and will never, be erased," he said.

The Trevor Project will continue to run its 24/7 mental health support services, as will other organizations, and leaders of 988 say the hotline will serve anyone who calls with compassion. □



# Medicare and Social Security go-broke dates pushed up due to rising health care costs, new SSA law

By **FATIMA HUSSEIN**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The go-broke dates for Medicare and Social Security 's trust funds have moved up as rising health care costs and new legislation affecting Social Security benefits have contributed to earlier projected depletion dates, according to an annual report released Wednesday. The go-broke date or the date at which the programs will no longer have enough funds to pay full benefits was pushed up to 2033 for Medicare's hospital insurance trust fund, according to the new report from the programs' trustees. Last year's report put the go-broke date at 2036.

Meanwhile, Social Security's trust funds which cover old age and disability recipients will be unable to pay full benefits beginning in 2034, instead of last year's estimate of 2035. After that point, Social Security would only be able to pay 81% of benefits.

The trustees say the latest findings show the urgency of needed changes to the programs, which have faced dire financial projections for decades. But making changes to the programs has long been politically unpopular, and lawmakers have repeatedly kicked Social Security and



A Social Security card is displayed on Oct. 12, 2021, in Tigard, Ore.

**Associated Press**

Medicare's troubling math to the next generation. President Donald Trump and other Republicans have vowed not to make any cuts to Medicare or Social Security, even as they seek to shrink the federal government's expenditures. Social Security Administration Commissioner Frank Bisignano, sworn into his role in May, said in a statement that "the financial status of the trust funds remains a top priority for the Trump Administration." A common misconception is that Social Security would be completely unable to pay benefits once it reaches its

go-broke date. "Current-law projections indicate that Medicare still faces a substantial financial shortfall that needs to be addressed with further legislation. Such legislation should be enacted sooner rather than later to minimize the impact on beneficiaries, providers, and taxpayers," the trustees state in the report. The trustees are made up of six people the Treasury Secretary serves as managing trustee, alongside the secretaries of Labor, Health and Human Services, and the commissioner of Social Security. Two other presi-

dentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed trustees serve as public representatives, however those roles have been vacant since July 2015. About 68 million people are enrolled in Medicare, the federal government's health insurance that covers those 65 and older, as well as people with severe disabilities or illnesses. Wednesday's report shows a worsening situation for the Medicare hospital insurance trust fund compared to last year. But the forecasted go-broke date of 2033 is still later than the dates of 2031, 2028 and

2026 predicted just a few years ago. Once the fund's reserves become depleted, Medicare would be able to cover only 89% of costs for patients' hospital visits, hospice care and nursing home stays or home health care that follow hospital visits. The report said expenses last year for Medicare's hospital insurance trust fund came in higher than expected. Income exceeded expenditures by nearly \$29 billion last year for the hospital insurance trust fund, the report stated. Trustees expect that surplus to continue through 2027. Deficits then will follow until the fund becomes depleted in 2033. A payroll tax on covered earnings provides the main funding for the hospital insurance trust fund. Future expenses paid by the fund are expected to increase at a faster pace than earnings. Legislation is needed to change those tax rates. The report states that the Social Security Social Security Fairness Act, enacted in January, which repealed the Windfall Elimination and Government Pension Offset provisions of the Social Security Act and increased Social Security benefit levels for some workers, had an impact on the depletion date of SSA's trust funds. □

## U.S. starts evacuating some diplomats from its embassy in Israel as Iran conflict intensifies

By **MATTHEW LEE**

**AP Diplomatic Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The State Department has begun evacuating nonessential diplomats and their families from the U.S. embassy in Israel as hostilities between Israel and Iran intensify and President Donald Trump warns of the possibility of getting directly involved in the conflict. A government plane evacuated a number of diplomats and family members who had asked to leave the country Wednesday, two U.S. officials said. That came shortly before U.S. Ambassador to Israel

Mike Huckabee announced on X that the embassy was making plans for evacuation flights and ships for private American citizens. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to describe sensitive diplomatic movements. "Given the ongoing situation and as part of the embassy's authorized departure status, mission personnel have begun departing Israel through a variety of means," the State Department said. "Authorized departure" means that nonessential staff and the families of all personnel are eligible to leave at government ex-

pense. There was no indication of how many diplomats and family members departed on the flight or how many may have left by land routes to Jordan or Egypt. The evacuations, comments from the White House and shifting of American military aircraft and warships into and around the Middle East have heightened the possibility of deepening U.S. involvement in a conflict that threatens to spill into a wider regional war. Trump has issued increasingly pointed warnings about the U.S. joining Israel in striking at Iran's nuclear



Beachgoers leave during a missile alert from Iran, in Tel Aviv, Israel, Wednesday, June 18, 2025.

**Associated Press**

program, saying Wednesday that he doesn't want to carry out a U.S. strike on the Islamic Republic but suggesting he is ready to act if it's necessary.

The State Department also has steadily ramped up its warnings to American citizens in Israel and throughout the region, including in Iraq. □



# Karen Read found not guilty of second-degree murder, guilty of drunken driving in boyfriend's death

By **MICHAEL CASEY** and **PATRICK WHITTLE**  
**Associated Press**

**DEDHAM, Mass. (AP)** — A jury found Karen Read not guilty of second-degree murder and manslaughter charges Wednesday in the 2022 death of her Boston police officer boyfriend, a case that attracted legions of true crime followers who erupted in cheers when word of the acquittal spread outside court. The same jury found her guilty of a lesser charge of drunken driving. The jury handed down its decision after deliberating for at least 22 hours since June 13.

Cheers from the crowd outside could be heard in the courtroom as the verdict was read. With cheering supporters, Read departed the courthouse with her attorneys and family.

"No one has fought harder for justice for John O'Keefe than I have," Read said. The verdict came nearly a year after a separate jury deadlocked over Read's involvement in the January 2022 death of John O'Keefe and resulted in a judge declaring a mistrial. It's a huge victory for Read's lawyers, who have long asserted she was framed by police after



**Karen Read gestures to supporters after she was found not guilty of second-degree murder on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, in Dedham, Mass.**

dropping O'Keefe off at a party at the home of a fellow officer. Prosecutors argued the 45-year-old Read hit O'Keefe, 46, with her SUV before driving away, but the defense maintained O'Keefe was killed inside the home and later dragged outside.

Read faced charges of second-degree murder, manslaughter and leaving the scene outside Boston. A second-degree murder conviction would have carried a life sentence.

Read's father, Bill Read, told reporters outside the courthouse he felt relief and "tremendous thanks" to God when the verdict was read.

"We need to get our life back together, and we will," he said. Asked why he thought the second trial's outcome was different, he said "another year of information circulating in the public, and people are aware of what's happened."

T.D. Floras of Nashua, New

Hampshire, was standing directly next to the barrier facing the court house after the jury's verdict was read.

She held her chorkie, Lucy, in her arms, and the dog wore a sign around her neck reading "Free Karen." Floras said she is "beyond thrilled and excited" about the outcome.

"I would do that OUI probation for her myself," she said. "It's been a long-time coming, so let's put this behind her now so she can

have some peace in her life."

Several witnesses in the case said in a statement Wednesday that their "hearts are with John and the entire O'Keefe family." The witnesses who signed the statement included Jennifer McCabe, who was with Read and O'Keefe the night of his death, and Brian Albert, who owned the home where the party took place.

"While we may have more to say in the future, today we mourn with John's family and lament the cruel reality that this prosecution was infected by lies and conspiracy theories spread by Karen Read, her defense team, and some in the media. The result is a devastating miscarriage of justice," the statement said.

Much like during the first trial, attorneys spent months presenting their case, featuring hundreds of pieces of evidence and dozens of witnesses.

Read's defense said O'Keefe was beaten, bitten by a dog, then left outside a home in the Boston suburb of Canton in a conspiracy orchestrated by the police that included planting evidence. □

## Musk's X sues New York over requirement to show how social media platforms handle problematic posts

By **JENNIFER PELTZ**

**Associated Press**



**New York Attorney General Letitia James speaks during a news conference outside Manhattan federal court in New York on Feb. 14, 2025.**

**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Elon Musk's X sued Tuesday to try to stop New York from requiring reports on how social media platforms handle problematic posts a regulatory approach that the company successfully challenged in California. New York's law, which Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul signed late last year, is poised to take effect later this year. X maintains that the measure impinges on free speech rights and on a 1996 federal law that, among other things, lets internet platforms moderate posts as they see fit.

New York is improperly try-

ing "to inject itself into the content-moderation editorial process" by requiring "politically charged disclosures" about it, Bastrop, Texas-based X Corp. argues in the suit. "The state is impermissibly trying to generate public controversy about content moderation in a way that will pressure social media companies, such as X Corp., to restrict, limit, disfavor or censor certain constitutionally protected content on X that the state dislikes," says the suit, filed in federal court in Manhattan.

New York Attorney General Letitia James' office said

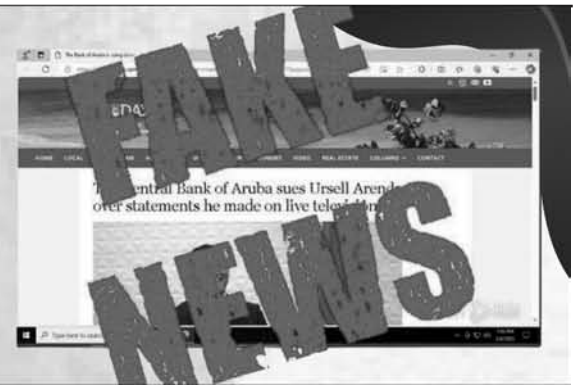
in a statement released Wednesday that it was reviewing the complaint and will "stand ready to defend the constitutionality of our laws." The law requires social media companies to report twice a year on whether and how they define hate speech, racist or extremist content, disinformation and some other terms. The platforms also have to detail their content moderation practices and data on the number of posts they flagged, the actions they took, the extent to which the offending material was seen or shared, and more. □



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## Police say a German man engaged in cybergrooming and pressured a U.S. teen to kill himself

By STEFANIE DAZIO

Associated Press

**BERLIN (AP)** — A 20-year-old man has been arrested in Germany on suspicion of engaging in an online campaign of cybergrooming and virtual sexual abuse of children, including pressuring a 13-year-old American boy to kill himself and livestream the act, authorities said Wednesday. The German-Iranian man was arrested Tuesday. The man, whose name was not made public in line with German privacy rules, was taken into custody at his parents' apartment in the northern city of Hamburg. Prosecutors have yet to decide whether to bring formal charges. He denied wrongdoing in a closed-doors appearance before a judge, authorities said. "The acts exceed human imagination," Hamburg Attorney General Jörg Fröhlich said at a news conference Wednesday.



From left, Chief Public Prosecutor Joerg Froehlich, Chief of Police Falk Schnabel, and Head of the State Office of Criminal Investigation Jan Hieber, give a press conference by the police and Chief Public Prosecutor at police headquarters after a 20-year-old was arrested on suspicion of murdering a child, in Hamburg, Germany, Wednesday, June 18, 2025.

Associated Press

German news agency dpa reported. The man is accused of perpetrating a complex inter-

national cybergrooming operation as a member of "764," which the FBI describes as a violent online

network that exploits minors virtually to coerce them into acts of self-harm and sexual abuse.

The man is suspected of committing 120 crimes against eight victims, ages 11 to 15, who were from Germany, England, Canada and the U.S. Another of the victims, a 14-year-old Canadian girl, attempted to take her own life. Authorities have not released the names of any of the alleged victims.

In the case of the 13-year-old American boy, German police and prosecutors said the suspect used another underaged victim to pressure the teen. The violations occurred online between 2021, when the suspect was 16 years old, and 2023, police said.

FBI Director Kash Patel wrote about 764 on the social platform X last month, calling it "deeply disturbing." He said federal agents were investigating "hundreds of cases around the country" and are working with other agencies to make arrests. □

## U.S. sanctions leadership of Mexico's Jalisco cartel

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — The Trump administration on Wednesday imposed economic sanctions on five high-ranking members of Mexico's powerful Jalisco New Generation Cartel for their drug trafficking, while also citing their involvement in killings. Previous administrations have also sanctioned the cartel — one of Mexico's most powerful — as the Trump administration also did in May, when it targeted the cartel's fuel theft operations. The sanctions freeze any assets the individuals or

companies have in the U.S. and prohibit U.S. citizens from doing business with them. "CJNG's reign of terror across Mexico and its trafficking of fentanyl into the United States has destroyed countless innocent lives," U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement. "The United States remains strongly committed to leveraging all available tools to degrade the capacity of CJNG and other cartels to flood our streets with dangerous drugs and perpetrate heinous acts of vio-

lence against civilians." In February, the U.S. administration designated Jalisco New Generation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorist. The cartel is led by Nemesio Rubén "El Mencho" Oseguera Cervantes and he was among the five leaders named Wednesday. Washington has offered a \$15 million reward for information leading to his capture. Two of those sanctioned have been recently connected to high-profile investigations in Mexico.



The letters "CJNG" for the group's formal name, Jalisco New Generation Cartel, covers the facade of an abandoned home in El Limoncito, in the Michoacan state of Mexico, Oct. 30, 2021.

Associated Press

Gonzalo Mendoza Gaytan has been linked to a ranch in Jalisco state where relatives of missing people found hundreds of

garments, shoes and other items. Authorities believe the ranch was used by the Jalisco cartel to train recruits. □

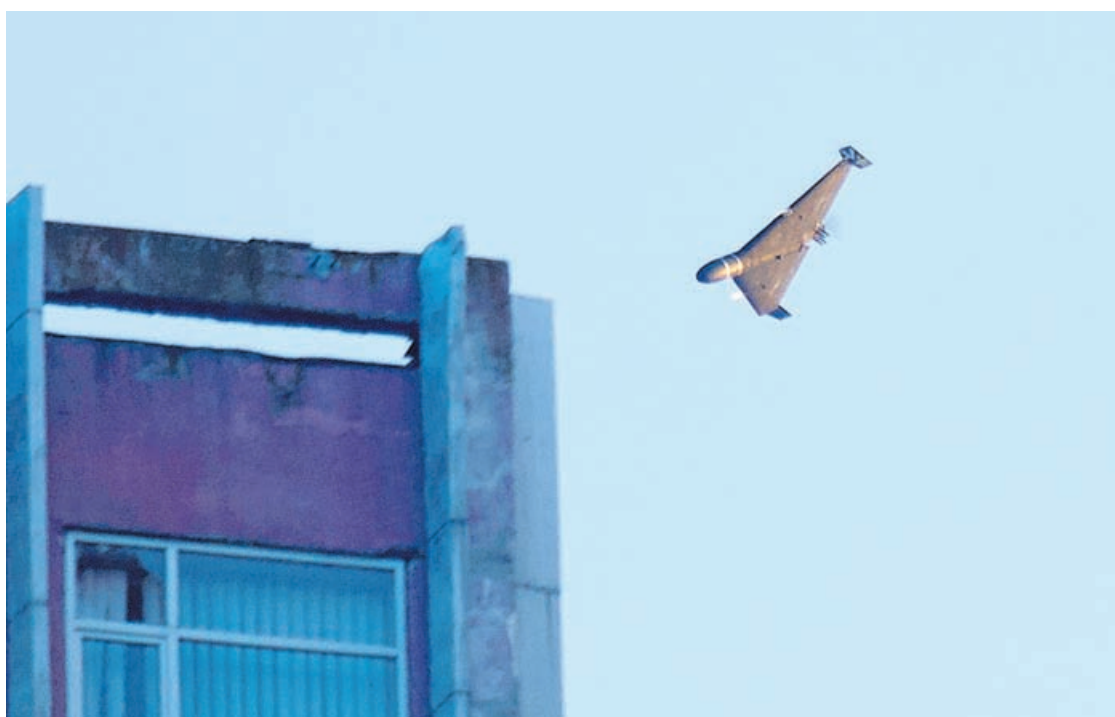


# Kyiv rescuers find more bodies as death toll from latest Russian aerial attack climbs to 28

By **JUSTIN SPIKE and ILLIA NOVIKOV**

**Associated Press**

**KYIV, Ukraine (AP)** —Emergency workers pulled more bodies Wednesday from the rubble of a nine-story Kyiv apartment building demolished by a Russian missile, raising the death toll from the latest attack on the Ukrainian capital to 28. The building in Kyiv's Solomianskyi district took a direct hit and collapsed during the deadliest Russian attack on Kyiv this year. Authorities said that 23 of those killed were inside the building. The remaining five died elsewhere in the city. Workers used cranes, excavators and their hands to clear more debris from the site, while sniffer dogs searched for buried victims. The blast blew out windows and doors in neighboring buildings in a wide radius of damage. The attack overnight on Monday into Tuesday was part of a sweeping barrage as Russia once again sought to overwhelm Ukrainian air defenses. Russia fired more than 440 drones and 32 missiles in what Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said was one of the biggest bombardments of the war, now in its fourth year. Russia has launched a summer offensive on parts of



**A Russian drone attacks a building during Russia's massive missile and drone air attack in Kyiv, Ukraine, Tuesday, June 17, 2025.**

the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line and has intensified long-range attacks that have struck urban residential areas. At the same time, U.S.-led peace efforts have failed to gain traction. Also, Middle East tensions and U.S. trade tariffs have drawn world attention away from Ukraine's pleas for more diplomatic and economic pressure to be placed on Russia. The U.S. Embassy in Kyiv said the attack clashed with the attempts by the administration of President Donald Trump to reach a

settlement that will stop the fighting. "This senseless attack runs counter to President Trump's call to stop the killing and end the war," the embassy posted on social platform X. Kyiv authorities declared Wednesday an official day of mourning. Mourners laid flowers on swings and slides at a playground across the street from the collapsed building. On Tuesday, a man had waited hours there for his 31-year-old son's body to be pulled from the rubble. Psychologists from Ukraine's

emergency services provided counseling to survivors of the attack and to family members of those who died. "Some people are simply in a stupor, they simply can't move," Karyna Dovhal, one of the psychologists, told AP. "People are waiting for their sons, brothers, uncles ... Everyone is waiting." Valentin Hrynkov, a 64-year-old handyman in a local school who lived on the seventh floor of a connected building that did not collapse, said he and his wife woke up to the sound

of explosions followed by a pause, and then another blast that rattled their own building. He said his wife had shrapnel injuries in her back and his legs and feet were cut by broken glass. The damage trapped them in their apartment for around 30 minutes before rescue workers could free them, he said. He felt an overwhelming sense of "helplessness and primal fear" during the attack, he told The Associated Press. "I was especially scared to sleep last night," Hrynkov said. "A car drives by and I cover my head. It's scary." By dawn on Tuesday, residents of buildings in the densely populated neighborhood could be seen huddled in ground-floor entryways to seek shelter from the ongoing drone assault. Drones were striking every few minutes within hundreds of meters of the building hit by the missile. The continuing attack forced firefighters and rescue teams to delay the rescue operation. Relatives and friends of the destroyed building's residents later gathered outside in shock, many crying and calling out names, hoping survivors might still be found beneath the rubble. □

**Associated Press**



**India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, left, and Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney shake hands during a meeting at the G7 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, Tuesday, June 17, 2025.**

**Associated Press**

By **RAJESH ROY**  
**Associated Press**

**NEW DELHI (AP)** — India and Canada agreed to restore diplomatic services nearly

two years after Ottawa accused New Delhi of alleged involvement in the killing of a Sikh separatist leader, which turned into a row straining

## India and Canada to restore diplomatic services nearly two years after killing of Sikh separatist

relations between the two countries. The announcement was made after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart, Mark Carney, met Tuesday on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit in Kananaskis, Alberta. "The leaders agreed to designate new high commissioners, with a view to returning to regular services to citizens and businesses in both countries," a statement from Carney's office said. High commissioners are senior diplomats, representing their country's interests and fostering relationships with the host nation.

Modi and Carney reiterated the importance of a bilateral relationship based on mutual respect and a commitment to the principle of territorial sovereignty, according to the statement. They also discussed further collaboration in several sectors, including technology, digital transition, food security, and critical minerals. Meanwhile, India's foreign ministry underscored the importance of restarting senior ministerial engagements to "rebuild trust and bring momentum to the relationship." Carney's predecessor, Justin Trudeau, shocked the world in September 2023 after

announcing in Parliament there were credible allegations about India's link to the killing of Hareep Singh Nijjar near Vancouver. New Delhi vehemently denied the allegations and accused Trudeau's government of harboring extremists. The Indian government had declared Nijjar a terrorist in 2020 under a law meant to suppress dissent. The Sikh independence advocate was a prominent member of the Khalistan movement, banned in India, to create an independent Sikh homeland. He was seen as a human rights activist by Sikh organizations. □



## Aruba's Nature is to be Cherished



**ST. CRUZ —** The national park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There is numerous wildlife to discover like for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches. There are more places on the island that are a preserved area like the Bubali Plas which is a bird sanctuary.

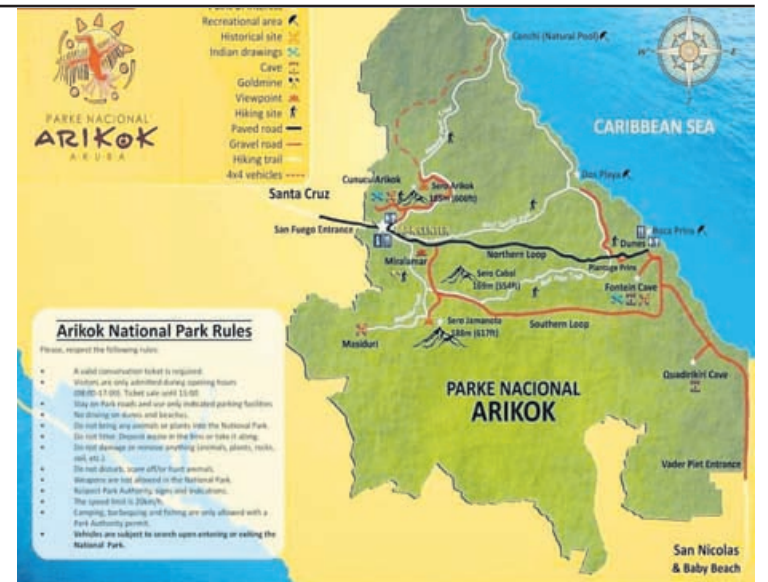
The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable

journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available. Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys*

coriacea) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches. A very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

### Bubali Magic

This beautiful close-up image of the pink bird is courtesy of Michiel Oversteegen of the Aruba Birdlife Conservation. This important founda-



tion showcases and builds awareness of Aruba's birds and other native flora and fauna. You may have seen a 'pink cloud' lately at the Bubali or Spanish Lagoon Wetlands areas? It's most likely to be Roseate Spoonbills (*Ajaia ajaja*) or 'Chucharon Cora' as they are known in Papiamentu. This unusual looking bird forages in shallow muddy water while sweeping its flattened bill from side to side to catch small fish, crustaceans and other aquatic invertebrates. The Roseate Spoonbill remains an uncommon sight as they are vulnerable to degradation of feeding and nesting habitats (Wetlands). (Source: arikok national park)

The aforementioned is just a part of what Aruba's nature has to offer. We cannot

stress enough to go, see for yourself. The island has the most beautiful beaches but it is also worthwhile to go beyond this and get an idea of our entire island. Lately there is a discussion going on about the effect certain activities have on our nature, for example the ATV vehicles cause a lot of dust, noise and leave tire tracks. Animals live in these areas where the vehicles run, often with high speed and with detrimental consequences to flora and fauna. Motorized vehicles are forbidden to drive on the sand dunes in the Northern part of the island and all beaches in Aruba are forbidden for any motorized vehicle. Treasure our island to enjoy it like you do: as a tropical and natural paradise. We truly appreciate it! □



**(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there are an additional two "hidden" natural pools that are situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary.**

### Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known "Cura

di Turtuga (Turtle's Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you're up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you've completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty

## Visit the island's hidden natural pools

of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm.



It's also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

### Cave Pool

This relatively new pool appeared just a few years ago, when a part of the dried up coral floor broke off and created a partition between the ocean and what is now the natural pool that is hidden there. Because it's still so new, there is no official name for it, but most people just call it the cave pool.

Just like the Conchi, the new natural pool is situated on the northern coast of Aruba. However, this pool is much easier to reach with any type of vehicle, and there is no hiking needed. This spot has also become a regular stop for touring

visitors.

When you get there, maybe you won't be able to spot the pool immediately, because you will probably notice the moon-shaped lagoon where wild northern waves crash into each other. Sounds scary, but if you look down on your right, you'll see a calm, crystal blue little pool in the corner. To get there, you have to climb down some stairs. Be careful when climbing down and follow the instructions of your tour guide if you have one.

And just like Conchi, this pool also has a jumping spot, and a rope to climb back up the boulder. □

Picture of cave pool is credited to RockaBeach Tours



# The Aruban Cunukero From past to present

**(Oranjestad)—Aruba's culture consists of rich historical traditions that make up the Aruban identity and lifestyle. However, the life of the cunukero (farmer) is perhaps the most important aspect of our culture, in a sense representing to locals the true essence of the Aruban.**

Historically, cunucus (farms) played a huge role in the early social and economic development of Aruba, and its relevance dates back to the early days of the colonization era. Upon being discovered by Spanish conquistadors in the late 15th century, Aruba was used primarily as a ranch, housing horses and cattle brought from Europe. During the Dutch colonization era where the West Indian Company (WIC) dominated the economic sphere on the island, using the land to set up cattle farms and ranches remained popular.

Anthropologist Sidney Mintz divided Caribbean farmers back in four categories:

1. The "squatters", who were mostly comprised of illegal and poor colonists, runaway slaves and deserters who took advantage of the Spanish's weak supervision on Caribbean islands like Cuba and the DR;
2. Then you have "Early Yeomen", who were legal farmers who came to the west under contract. Once their contract expired, they were given a plot of land for independent use;
3. Proto-Peasants were plantation slaves who were allowed to have a small piece of land to grow food for their own consumption. This was to curb the cost of living on the plantations;

4. Lastly you have the "Runaway Peasantries", usually comprised of runaway slaves who acquired farming tools and cattle through stealing or through secret exchanges with other slaves from different plantations.

However, the Aruban cunukeros back then are hard to place, and their history may explain why.

From 1636 (beginning of Dutch colonization era) to before the oil industry in 1924, Aruba's population consisted of mostly farmers. These farmers were mostly indigenous and were characterized as peasants. They weren't allowed to participate in trading, but instead were granted a piece of land to live off of. However, in exchange for this grant, these indigenous farmers were obligated to work for the WIC, doing daily tasks such as taking care of or hunting cattle—large majority of which were destined for Curacao, clean water tanks and chop wood, among other things.

As much as these farmers were given to opportunity to live "free" with a plot of land, their exclusion from the trading and business world, as well as being deprived the chance to become real property and cattle owners, made them a unique group among Caribbean farmers at the time.

The WIC placed a lot of restrictions on these indigenous farmers—a method to safeguard their cattle deposit on the island. The indigenous farmers were mostly granted less than 7 acres of land. Those who owned bigger land were either once affiliated with the WIC or



were colonists who settled on the island to try their luck at farming. In 1767, there were about 120 houses/cunucus on the island.

These Aruban farmers were also limited to the amount of cattle they could keep. Most kept goats as cattle, as only those who were affiliated with the WIC could keep (more) sheep. Of the 76 goat herders on the island, about 45 of them had less than 30 goats, and only 7 of them had more than 60 goats.

It wasn't until the WIC was defunct in late 18th century that these farmers were able to obtain more freedom as cunukeros. After 1824, the government gave these farmers official permission to keep livestock, and the obligations once placed on them were officially discarded.

Because of the dry climate in Aruba, growing food for commercial purposes was not popular. The focus was mainly on cattle herding and taking care of livestock. However, livestock need food to survive, and when Aruba experienced its duper dry climate, many farmers would see a big loss in their livestock, and hence profit.

Although the WIC at one point did try to come up with an initiative to get more people to have land on the island, the climate never really allowed real profit from farming.

Because of the climate, Aruban farmers in general could not keep large quantities of livestock. At a certain point toward the end of the 18th century, the climate got so bad that many farmers decided to leave the island for a while.

For this reason, the farming economy on the island remained small. As the years went by and people noticed that these farms could not really produce any sustainable profit, farmers kept their small piece of land just to live off of. This is why the Aruban cunukeros only played a very tiny role into the plantation economy.

In modern Aruba, cunucus and cunukeros still exist on the island, fortunately with more freedom and more opportunity to tap into the agricultural market. These farmers usually sell their produce on a smaller scale, like during farmers' market events and other types of (holiday) events.

Source: "Arubaans Akkoord: Opstellen over Aruba van voor de komst van de olieindustrie (Aruban Accord: Essays on Aruba Before the Arrival of the Oil Industry)" by Alofs, Luc; Rutgers, Wim; Coomans, Henny E. red.□





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## The Lionfish And its threat to our marine wild life



(Oranjestad)—Despite its colorful and striking appearance, the lionfish has become a Caribbean-wide problem for Atlantic sea life. The Aruban marine wild life is also affected by this beautiful dilemma, as it is foreign to our waters and has become a danger to our local fish and reefs.

Originating from the Indo-Pacific Ocean, the lionfish is

a relatively small fish. It has no teeth, but it does protect itself against predators using its sharp, colorful spikes. It is said that the sting of a lionfish can be up to 100 times more painful than that of a bee's sting.

Its natural predators in the Indo-Pacific are sharks and barracudas, but in the Caribbean Sea, local fish do not recognize the lionfish as part

of their diet. In other words, the lionfish has no predators in the Caribbean Sea. And this becomes a major problem for our local marine life; if there are no predators to stimulate population control of lionfish, these fish can continue to reproduce and expand to other parts of the Atlantic, become more invasive and dangerous for other types of fish.

For Aruba, the lionfish is a problem especially for our local coral reefs. According to Patrick van Brakel, lionfish expert and hunter from the Hunting Lionfish Aruba foundation, every reef has a "cleaning station"—tiny fish that eat algae and other types of waste on a reef, thus maintaining the reef's health and providing food to the fish population in the area. However, as the lionfish feeds off of these tiny fish, it becomes harder for the coral reef to maintain its health.

Patrick also shares the origins of lionfish in the Caribbean

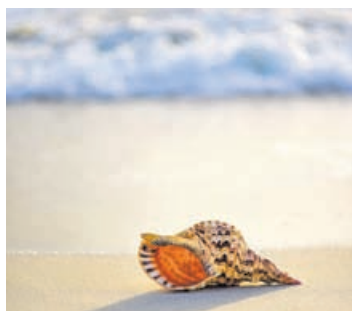


Sea. It is theorized that the introduction of these fish in the Atlantic happened in Florida, where people would buy lionfish from across the world to keep in their aquariums. However, lionfish grow, and as these buyers realized that the fish were too much upkeep, they were let out into the ocean to roam free. From continental USA, the lionfish travelled to and invaded the entire Caribbean area, from Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao up to New York. In Aruba, lionfish were discovered in 2009.

Controlling the lionfish population is challenge, as each female fish can lay up to 40,000 eggs a day. Luckily,

we have people like van Brakel who dedicate their lives hunting and capturing these invasive species, using them for consumption and jewelry making.

They are caught with a hand spear, an object resembling a garbage picker with 4 sharp prongs. These spears are used like a sling shot to catch lionfish from a distance. These fish are then put into a collecting tube and taken out of the water. Van Brakel not only catches them himself, but also cooks them for locals and tourists at The LionFish Snack Aruba in Paradera. This way, he does his part in protecting the local wild life. □



(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.

## Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high number of seashells, coral and amount of sand confiscated is very strange and

it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable.

Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that they have to pay before leaving. This is surely not a pleasant experience for the tourist. This also leads

to a negative reaction which can put our tourism in a negative light.

Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all give nature the respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accept-

ing these from local sellers or companies.

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours! □



# Basic driving rules on Aruba: Roundabouts

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

## Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.



## Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to

know when to switch to the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then you need to switch to the left lane on the high way before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

## Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)

Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confused among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two

extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra eye open.

## Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

## "Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located near the Talk of the Town hotel, west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

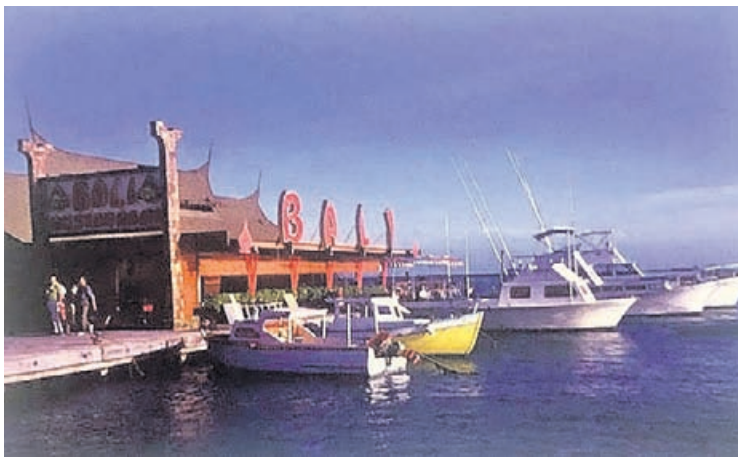
When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! ☐





# The Bali Restaurant: a touristic hot spot and lost gem on the island



**(Oranjestad)**—Once located in what is now the Renaissance Marina, the Bali Restaurant was once both a touristic and local hot spot, and nowadays it's considered a forgotten gem on the island.

Known as "the floating restaurant", Bali first opened in 1955 by Willem "Bill" Strijland, who had experience in Javanese cuisine. At the time, the restaurant was pretty exclusive—with space to host only 25 guests. Yet, 4 years

later, it was named the best restaurant in the Caribbean by the Caribbean Tourist Association.

The restaurant was probably most iconic for its Javanese-inspired exterior with its pointy, slanted roofs. However, the first version of Bali did not look like that at all but was still considered as one of the most popular restaurants on the island at the time. The restaurant saw three different owners during its existence, during which it

underwent various renovations and rebranding.

In 1964, the restaurant was taken over by Karel "Carl" Schmand. Over the years, the restaurant needed constant renovation and repair, mainly due to its vulnerability to leaks and the unstable pillars underneath the foundation. However, the biggest change made to the restaurant happened in the year 1970—still under the ownership of Schmand, when it got its iconic pointy roofs. The restaurant was also expanded to host a total of 85 guests. This was "The New Bali", who had its official (re) opening in 1972.

After 1972, when Ronny Schmand took over, the restaurant saw yet another expansion; this time complete with a long bar and dance floor, where guests enjoyed live music from legendary Aruban musician and com-



poser, Toti Arends.

After 1989, the restaurant was again handed over to other owners, and since then suffered from unstable pillars underneath the foundation, resulting in various leaks and overflowing of water into the restaurant. And as most great things come to an end, so did the survival and maintenance of the Bali Restaurant. However, folks today still reminisce its legacy, and it's now considered a lost monument.

Be apart of the conversation: if you or any family member of yours have a memory of the Bali restaurant, whether it be a picture or just a story, share it with us! We would love to see this legendary hot spot through the lens of our visitors!

Source and pictures credit to: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers. □

## Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use



**(Oranjestad)**—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

### Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa\* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

When the fruit is unripe and green, this can be

used to stimulate menstruation flow in women. This also stimulates the passing kidney stones. When ripe, the fruit can be used for poisoning in the gut and can help treat rheumatic diseases, like arthritis.

However, breastfeeding women who cannot produce much milk are advised not to consume too pineapple, and people with acid reflux are recommended to not consume any pineapple at all.

### Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water



and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

### Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow. □

**Eggplant kataplan\* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis.**

\*warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.

\*kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen.



## CROSSWORD

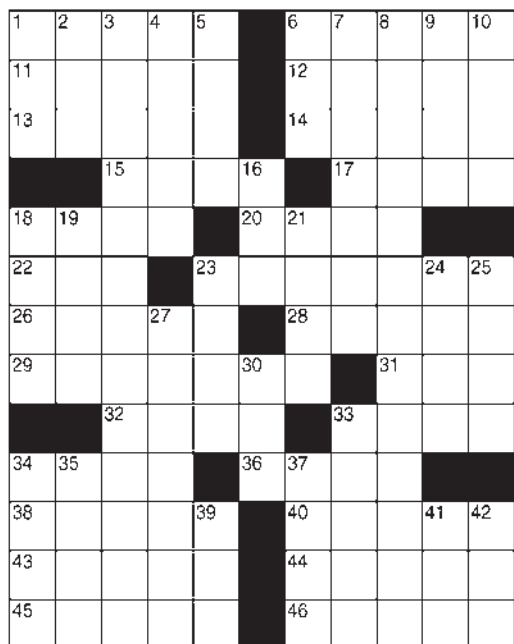
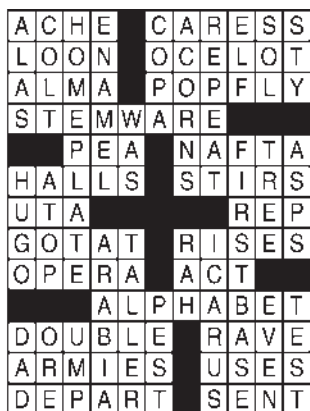
By THOMAS JOSEPH

### ACROSS

- 1 Light pastries
- 6 Jazz genre
- 11 Be in accord
- 12 Visibly shocked
- 13 Andean nation
- 14 Game piece
- 15 Otherwise
- 17 Wallet bills
- 18 Throws in
- 20 Greedy
- 22 Go bad
- 23 Understood
- 26 Tusk stuff
- 28 Chef's need
- 29 Bad point
- 31 Ball support
- 32 Bard's river
- 33 Hourglass fill
- 34 Cost of a hand
- 36 Granny, for one
- 38 Planet circlers
- 40 Bakery output
- 43 Final letter
- 44 Calliope need
- 45 Stopwatch button
- 46 Rash

### DOWN

- 1 Ocean off Cal.
- 2 "That's gross!"
- 3 Southern dish
- 4 Chops down
- 5 Drops in on
- 6 Ball club
- 7 Selfish one
- 8 Steak sides, some-times
- 9 Door sign
- 10 Signing needs
- 16 Corn helping
- 18 Parched
- 19 Pigeon's cousin
- 21 Expan-sive
- 23 Pita sandwich
- 24 Tied
- 25 Title page
- 27 Vindictive one's quest
- 30 Printing need
- 33 In a way, informally
- 34 Monet's "— and Psyche"
- 35 Iditarod end
- 37 Bygone auto
- 39 Got off one's feet
- 41 Porch item
- 42 Author Tan



6-23

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-23

### CRYPTOQUOTE

P T T P I I U K I B T U O K W B I

D F K F T P E T V R J U F E I

C S W R I . — H R I V F L H

E I V V I V H

**Cryptoquote:** ALL GROWN-UPS WERE ONCE CHILDREN ... BUT ONLY FEW OF THEM REMEMBER IT. — "THE LITTLE PRINCE," BY ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

## Cruise ship Schedule: June 01 - 27 2025

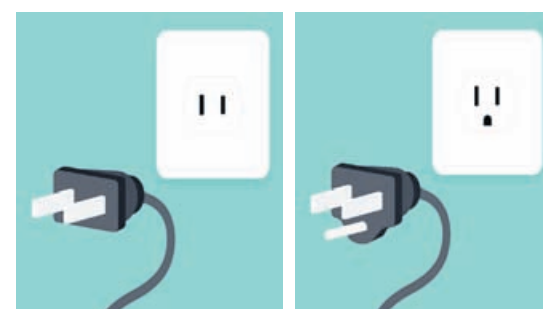
			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
SUN	01	SILVER SHADOW FREEWINDS - Dept.	08.00 ****	23.00 22.30	C E	1 -
WED	04	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
TUE	10	CARNIVAL HORIZON CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS	09.00 13.00	23.00 23.00	C I	1 1
TUE	17	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL VISTA	07.00 13.00	16.00 23.00	B C	1 1
WED	18	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00 08.00 07.00	22.00 23.00 16.00	C B I	1 1 1
TUE	24	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
FRI	27	SEVEN SEAS MARINER	10.00	21.00	C	1

## Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

### Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



### Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



### Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



### Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.





## Amazon hopes to deliver 10,000 robotaxis annually with new factory, challenging Waymo



In this undated handout photo provided by Zoox, Zoox robotaxis are assembled at a 220,000-square-foot factory located in Hayward, California.

Associated Press

By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE**  
**AP Technology Writer**  
**HAYWARD, Calif. (AP)** — Amazon is gearing up to make as many as 10,000 robotaxis annually at a sprawling plant near Silicon Valley as it prepares to challenge self-driving cab leader Waymo. Tesla CEO Elon Musk is also vying to join the autonomous race. The 220,000-square-foot (20,440-square-meter) robotaxi factory announced Wednesday heralds a new phase in Amazon's push into a technological frontier that began taking shape in 2009, when Waymo was launched as a secret project within Google. Amazon began eyeing the market five years ago when it shelled out \$1.2 billion for self-driving startup Zoox, which will be the brand behind a robotaxi service that plans to begin transporting customers in Las Vegas late this year before expanding

into San Francisco next year. Zoox, conceived in 2014, will be trying to catch up to Waymo, which began operating robotaxis in Phoenix nearly five years ago. It started charging for rides in San Francisco in 2023 and also expanded into Los Angeles and Austin, Texas. Waymo says it has recorded more than 10 million paid rides while other would-be rivals such as Amazon and Tesla are still fine-tuning their self-driving technology and tackling how to ramp up their fleet. Since moving into the former bus manufacturing factory in 2023, Zoox has transformed it into a high-tech facility where its boxy, gondola-like vehicles are put together and tested along a 21-station assembly line. For now, Zoox is only making one robotaxi per day, but by next year hopes to be churning out three vehicles

per hour. Once it gets the factory up to full speed with production spread over two eight-hour shifts, Zoox is aiming to make 10,000 robotaxis annually in Hayward for a fleet aimed at entering other major markets, including Miami, Los Angeles and Atlanta. Although Zoox will be assembling its robotaxis in the U.S., about half of the parts are imported from outside the country, according to company officials. Waymo is also planning to expand into Atlanta and Miami and on Wednesday took the first step toward bringing its robotaxis to the most populous U.S. city with the disclosure of an application to begin testing its vehicles in New York. "It's an exciting time to be heading on this journey," Zoox CEO Aicha Evans said during a Tuesday tour of the robotaxi factory that she co-hosted with Jesse Levinson, the company's co-founder and chief technology officer. □



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# 'Jaws' changed movies forever, but Hollywood could still learn from it

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Fifty years after "Jaws" sunk its teeth into us, we're still admiring the bite mark.

Steven Spielberg's 1975 film, his second feature, left such a imprint on culture and Hollywood that barely any trip to the movies, let alone to the beach, has been the same since.

Few films have been more perfectly suited to their time and place than "Jaws," which half a century ago unspooled across the country in a then-novel wide release accompanied by Universal Pictures' opening-weekend publicity blitz. "Jaws" wasn't quite the first movie to try to gobble up moviegoers whole, in one mouthful (a few years earlier, "The Godfather" more or less tried it), but "Jaws" established — and still in many ways defines — the summer movie.

That puts "Jaws" at the birth of a trend that has since consumed Hollywood: the blockbuster era. When it launched in 409 theaters on June 20, 1975, and grossed a then-record \$7.9 million in its first days, "Jaws" set the template that's been followed ever-after by every action movie, superhero flick or dinosaur film that's tried to go big in the summer — a sleepy time in theaters before "Jaws" came around.

And yet the "Jaws" legacy is so much more than being Hollywood's ur-text blockbuster. It's not possible to, 50 years later, watch Spielberg's film and see nothing but the beginning of a box-office bonanza, or the paler fish it's inspired. It's just too good a movie — and too much unlike so many wannabes since — to be merely groundbreaking. It's a masterpiece in its own right. "It supercharged the language of cinema," the filmmaker Robert Zemeckis says in the upcoming documentary "Jaws @ 50: The Definitive Inside Story," premiering July 10 on National Geographic. That documentary, with Spielberg's participation, is just a small part of the festivities that have accompanied the movie's anniversary. Martha's Vineyard, where "Jaws" was shot, is hosting



This image released by Peacock shows Roy Scheider in a scene from "Jaws."

Associated Press

everything from concerts to "Jaws"-themed dog dress-ups. "Jaws," itself, is streaming on Peacock through July 14, along with a prime-time airing Friday on NBC, with an intro from Spielberg. The "Jaws" anniversary feels almost more like a national holiday — and appropriately so. But if "Jaws" is one of the most influential movies ever made, Hollywood hasn't always drawn the right lessons from it. "You're gonna need a bigger boat" has perhaps been taken too literally in movies that have leaned too much on scale and spectacle, when neither of those things really had much to do with the brilliance of Spielberg's classic.

## Local Color

Every time I rewatch "Jaws" — which I highly recommend doing on some projected screen, even a bedsheet, and preferably with an ocean nearby — I marvel at how much it gets from its Martha's Vineyard setting. Where U.S.-made film productions are shot has been a hot button issue lately. Various incentives often determine movie shooting locations, with set dressings, or CGI, filling in the rest. But "Jaws" shows you just how much more than tax credits you can get from a locale. Spielberg was convinced the adaptation of Peter Benchley's novel — inspired by Benchley's childhood summers on Nantucket — shouldn't be done in soundstages. After looking up and down the Atlantic coast, he settled on Nantucket's neighboring island. Like his first film, the Mojave Desert-set "Duel," Spielberg wanted his mecha-

nized shark to swim in a real, definable place.

"I felt the same way about 'Jaws,'" Spielberg says in the documentary. "I wanted to go to the natural environment so there was some kind of verisimilitude. So it needed to be in the ocean, out to sea."

It wasn't easy. The budget for "Jaws" nearly tripled to \$9 million and the shoot extended from 55 to 159 days. Spielberg would never again be under financial pressure on a picture, but the tortured "Jaws" production put him under a microscope. An AP report from 1975 began: "It is news when a 26-year-old film director goes \$2 million over budget and two and a half months over schedule and manages to avoid getting fired."

More than any other time in his career, Spielberg fretted. "'Jaws' was my Vietnam," he told Richard Schickel. "It was basically naive people against nature and nature beat us every day."

It also infused every inch of the frame with smalltown New England flavor in the way that no soundstage, or CGI, ever could.

## Less is more

When Spielberg was ready to start filming, his star attraction wasn't. The mechanized shark, nicknamed "Bruce" after the director's attorney, suffered frequent failures that forced Spielberg to find different approaches to shooting his shark scenes early in the film.

"Jaws" instead became, to Spielberg, a kind of homage to Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho." The suspense came less from the shark than the

fear of the unknown and that spine-tingling question: What's in the water? Spielberg, with the significant aid of John Williams' instantly iconic score, delayed the appearance of his Great White until well into the film. "The visual ellipsis," the critic Molly Haskell wrote, "created far greater menace and terror, as the shark is nowhere and everywhere."

Spielberg once estimated that Bruce's mechanical delays added \$175 million to the movie's box office. On its initial run, "Jaws" grossed \$260.7 million domestically in 1975. Adjusted for inflation, that's about \$1.5 billion. Nowadays, the shark would almost certainly be done, like most movie creatures, with computer animation. But "Jaws" showed that often the most powerful source of dread is our imagination.

## Human-scale

This is the time of year when the fate of the world often hangs in the balance. All manner of summer movies have had no bones about destroying cities for a mere plot point. Yet for all its terror, "Jaws" features only a handful of deaths. All of its drama is human-scaled. Compared to more swaggering blockbusters today, "Jaws" would be considered a modest, mid-budget movie.

That's partially why you have to almost remind yourself that the movie has only three main characters in Martin Brody (Roy Scheider), Matt Hooper (Richard Dreyfuss) and Quint (Robert Shaw). Casting director Sherry Rhodes peopled the cast with locals from the island, many of whom inject the film

with little moments of day-to-day humanity. "Jaws," in that way, feels more like a community than a cast.

## Escapism with something to say

On the one hand, "Jaws" had little to do directly with its times. The Vietnam War had just ended. Watergate had just led to the resignation of President Nixon. The heart-stopping story of a shark off the Massachusetts shoreline promised escapism.

Yet "Jaws" has endured as a parable of capitalism, pulled out time and time again to illustrate those endlessly repeating clashes of cash versus social safety.

"Amity is a summer town," says Amity's mayor, Larry Vaughn (Murray Hamilton) in the film. "We need summer dollars."

The shark gets the theme song and the movie poster, but the real villain of "Jaws" wears a pinstripe suit and smiles for the cameras. "As you can see, it's a beautiful day and the beaches are open," he says. More than the predator in the ocean, he, and the town, feast on human flesh.

## 'Jaws' is untouchable

There are boatloads of movies — including the three sequels that followed after — that have tried in vain to capture some of the magic of "Jaws." But what happened in June 1975, let alone on Martha's Vineyard the year before, isn't repeatable. Even the greatest movies are products of a thousand small miracles. That title? Benchley came up with it minutes before going to print. The iconic poster came from Roger Kastel's painting for the book. Scheider, for instance, learned about the movie by overhearing Spielberg at a party. Williams relied on just two notes for one of the most widely known film scores in movie history.

But no ingredient mattered more on "Jaws" than the man behind the camera. Filmmaking talents like Spielberg come around maybe a couple times a century, and in "Jaws," he emerged, spectacularly. What's maybe most striking about "Jaws" 50 years later is how much it still doesn't look like anything else. □



# Back-to-back Cats: Panthers repeat as Stanley Cup champions by beating the Oilers in 6 games

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

AP Hockey Writer

**SUNRISE, Fla. (AP)** — Stanley's stay in South Florida is getting extended.

The Florida Panthers repeated as Stanley Cup champions by beating the Edmonton Oilers 5-1 in Game 6 of the final on Tuesday night, becoming the NHL's first back-to-back winners since Tampa Bay in 2020 and '21 and the third team to do it this century. Sam Reinhart scored four goals, becoming just the sixth player in league history and first since Maurice Richard in 1957 to get that many in a game in the final. His third to complete the hat trick sent rats, along with hats, flying onto the ice. Matthew Tkachuk, one of the faces of the franchise, fittingly scored the Cup clincher.

More rats were part of the victory celebration when the clock hit zeroes. Panthers players mobbed in the corner, while the Oilers watched in dismay.

"Good evening, South Florida," Commissioner Gary Bettman said before presenting the trophy to captain Aleksander Barkov. "It feels like we just did this."

Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 28 of the 29 shots he faced,



The Florida Panthers celebrate with the Stanley Cup after defeating the Edmonton Oilers in Game 6 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Final in Sunrise, Fla., Tuesday, June 17, 2025.

Associated Press

closing the door on a rematch with the same end result. The only goal came from fellow Russian Vasily Podkolzin in garbage time, long after the outcome was decided and the NHL put a bow on a remarkable season that included Alex Ovechkin's milestone as the all-time leading goal scorer and Olympics-like buzz around the 4 Nations tournament in February.

There were chants of "We want the Cup!" as the final

moments ticked away. The Panthers already had it. Now they get to keep it.

"This is as good as the first one," Reinhart said.

"We learned some lessons. We stayed on the gas, foot on the pedal, and obviously the result speaks for itself."

Not long after the Lightning made three trips to the final in a row, Florida has done the same and now has the makings of a dynasty. The Panthers have won 11 of

12 playoff series since Tkachuk arrived by trade and Paul Maurice took over as coach in the summer of 2022.

"We've got to be a dynasty now," Tkachuk said. "Three years in a row finals, two championships. This is a special group."

The only time they have been on the wrong side of a handshake line was the final in Vegas in 2023, only after several key players were banged up and gut-

ting through significant injuries.

From the core of Tkachuk, Reinhart, Barkov and Sam Bennett on down the roster, they were much healthier this time around and were boosted by key trade deadline additions Brad Marchand and Seth Jones. Bennett led all goal-scorers this postseason with 15, and Marchand had six in the final alone.

Bennett won the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP. Barkov handed the Cup to first-time champion Nate Schmidt, and all the others winning it for the first time got it soon after.

"It's amazing to be able to be here," Schmidt said. "I don't know whether to laugh or cry."

Getting depth contributions from throughout the lineup allowed them to overpower Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and the Oilers, who struggled with Florida's ferocious forecheck and switched goaltenders multiple times in the final.

Stuart Skinner got the nod in Game 6 and was again done in by mistakes in front of him that ended with the puck in the net behind him and had his own blunder on Reinhart's second goal. □

## Cheerleaders can now go pro: Varsity Spirit's new league offers pay

By **TERESA M. WALKER**

AP Sports Writer

Varsity Spirit is starting a professional cheerleading league that promises to pay athletes, joining the crowded niche sports market that already includes softball, volleyball, 3-on-3 basketball, lacrosse, indoor football and more clamoring for both fans' attention and their dollars. Pro Cheer League is billed as the first professional cheerleading league for athletes 18 and older designed to give cheerleaders the chance to keep competing after college. Bill Seely, president of Varsity Spirit based in Mem-

phis, Tennessee, sees plenty of opportunity for all these sports to succeed. This cheer league's advantage comes from the sport's growth since the 1970s along with Varsity's own fan base through its cheerleading, dance team camps, events and shows. "That's going to help us really kind of build this out in a way that is sustainable and will continue to grow not just domestically but globally," Seely said. Varsity Spirit has had more than 80,000 people attend its events. The Pro Cheer League will try to tap into that fan base by competing the same night

of other events starting in January in Indianapolis when competition begins. The league will feature four teams stocked with 30 male and female athletes based in Atlanta, Dallas, Miami and San Diego. Teams will be selected from tryouts starting in September led by gym owners. Practice begins in November. After Indianapolis, five more events are planned in Houston, Atlanta, Anaheim and capped by the championship in Nashville at the end of March or start of April. Each match will feature three periods of competition with two focusing

on cheerleading skills, stunts, basket tosses and tumbling in bracket-style

rounds. The final period will feature choreography and music. □



In this image provided by Varsity Spirit, cheerleaders compete during a Varsity Spirit event in March 2025 in Dallas.

Associated Press



# Olympic champion Faith Kipyegon tries to become 1st woman to break 4-minute mile next week in Paris

By **PAT GRAHAM**  
AP Sports Writer

Faith Kipyegon's already a three-time Olympic 1,500-meter champion. She's already the world-record holder in the mile and 1,500. Next on her to-accomplish list: Become the first woman to break the 4-minute mile barrier. The 31-year-old Kipyegon is making a run at that hallowed mark in a Nike-sponsored event dubbed "Breaking4: Faith Kipyegon vs. the 4-Minute Mile" on June 26 at the Stade Charlety in Paris. She set the world record mark of 4:07.64 nearly two years ago during a Diamond League meet in Monaco. "I think breaking four will really cement my legacy,"



Faith Kipyegon, of Kenya, celebrates after winning the women's 1500-meter final at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Saturday, Aug. 10, 2024, in Saint-Denis, France.

Associated Press

Kipyegon said in a Zoom call on Wednesday. "The next generation is looking up to us to show them the way and this is what I'm doing now. ...

Everything we do, we have to dream big and just believe in ourselves that we could do it."

It was more than 71 years ago when British runner Roger Bannister became the first man to eclipse 4 minutes when he ran 3:59.4. For Kipyegon, finding extra speed to trim a little more than 7.64 seconds occupies her thoughts and drives her in training. But really, she and her coach, Patrick Sang, aren't altering from their routine too much to chase a sub-4 mile time.

What she's doing in workouts now has already proven highly successful. She won her third straight 1,500 Olympic title in Paris last August. A month before that, she broke her own 1,500 record on the same track where she will run next Thursday.

"For me, I would say being mentally strong and believing in everything I do," she said of preparing for big moments. "Believing in the training, believing in waking up to empower the next generation, believing in everything that has been from my younger time when I was running barefoot to where I am now. It has really given me that drive to wake up and go for training and just be strong."

She will be wearing the latest innovations from Nike, too, from her aerodynamic track suit to her spikes. Should she break the mark, it would be subject to ratification by World Athletics. Fellow Kenyan runner, longtime friend and training partner Eliud Kipchoge has been providing emotional support.

He had an event set up for him in 2019, when he ran a marathon in 1:59:40 to break the 2-hour marathon barrier at the INEOS 1:59 Challenge in Austria. The mark wasn't ratified by the sport's governing body. □



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